

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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SUBJECT: PSOE'S GONZALEZ VISIT TO VENEZUELA

REF: MADRID 6167 (NOTAL), 76 MADRID 9073 (NOTAL),

SANTIAGO 7241 (NOTAL), 76 MADRID 9247 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY. FELIPE GONZALEZ WAS VERY MUCH THE HONORED GUEST HERE IN VENEZUELA WITH HIS VISIT RECEIVING WIDE PRESS COVERAGE. HIS MAJOR POINTS INCLUDED A COMPARISON OF PRESENT-DAY CHILE TO THE SPAIN OF 1973, A DENIAL OF ANY SOCIALIST-COMMUNIST PARLIAMENTARY ALLIANCE, THAT THE MOST SEVERE THREAT TO SPANISH DEMOCRACY IS INFLATION, AND THAT SPAIN'S PRIORITIES IN FOREIGN RELATIONS SHOULD BE EUROPE, LATIN AMERICA AND THE ARAB WORLD, IN THAT ORDER.END SUMMARY.

1. AFTER A WEEK OF PRESS COVERAGE OF HIS VISIT TO CHILE AND COLOMBIA, FELIPE GONZALEZ ARRIVED IN CARACAS THE AFTERNOON OF SEPTEMBER 2 FOR A TWO-DAY VISIT. HE WAS MET AT THE AIRPORT BY VENEZUELAN FOREIGN MINISTER ALBERTO SIMON CONSALVI AND THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE GOVERNING ACCION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DEMOCRATICA PARTY. GONZALEZ' VISIT COINCIDED WITH THAT OF THE PERUVIAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC LEADER AND APRA FOUNDER DR. RAUL HAYA DE LA TORRE. BOTH WERE GUESTS AT A SEPTEMBER 3 LUNCH HOSTED BY THE FOUNDER OF ACCION DEMOCRATICA AND THE FATHER OF VENEZUELAN DEMOCRACY, ROMULO BETANCOURT. GONZALEZ MET SEVERAL TIMES WITH ACCION DEMOCRATICA LEADERS AND WAS THE SEPTEMBER 4 BREAKFAST GUEST OF PRESIDENT CARLOS ANDRES

PEREZ. HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY LUIS YANEZ AND FRANCISCO FERNANDEZ.

2. ON SEPTEMBER 3, THE SPANISH POLITICIAN GAVE A LENGTHY PRESS CONFERENCE THAT WAS WELL-ATTENDED BY VENEZUELAN JOURNALISTS. SALIENT POINTS FOLLOW:

A. PURPOSE OF HIS TRIP WAS TO STRENGTHEN HIS PARTY'S TIES WITH POPULARLY ELECTED GOVERNMENTS AND TO MAKE A SHOW OF SOLIDARITY WITH THOSE PEOPLES WHO ARE "FIGHTING TO THROW OFF THE YOKE OF DICTATORSHIP;"

B. CHILE IS SIMILAR TO THE SPAIN OF 1973 WITH TREMENDOUS ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS BUT LITTLE DESPAIR SINCE THE POPULATION CAN SEE THE DEMOCRATIC "LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL;"

C. SPEAKING OF THE THEME OF EUROCOMMUNISM, GONZALEZ SAID THAT THE FRENCH AND ITALIAN COMMUNIST MOVEMENTS HAVE ATTRACTED A CERTAIN LEVEL OF POPULAR SUPPORT BECAUSE THEY HAVE ADOPTED FLEXIBLE, PLURALIST POSITIONS. SPANISH COMMUNISM IS MORE RIGID BECAUSE IT RETAINS A LENINIST FOUNDATION THAT HAS BEEN REJECTED BY THE SPANISH PEOPLE. IN CONTRACT, THE PSOE HAS ADAPTED MARXISM TO MODERN REALITY. HE THEN DENIED THAT THERE IS ANY SOCIALIST-COMMUNIST PARLIAMENTARY ALLIANCE, BUT ADMITTED THERE WILL BE TACTICAL AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES ON SPECIFIC ISSUES; LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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D. SPAIN'S INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SHOULD FOCUS ON EUROPE, LATIN AMERICA AND THE ARAB WORLD, IN THAT ORDER. SPAIN INTENDS TO CHANGE THE PATERNALISTIC ATTITUDE IT HAS HELD TOWARD LATIN AMERICA AND SHOULD STRIVE FOR A "HISPANIC BROTHERHOOD;"

E. INFLATION (RUNNING AT 40 PERCENT ACCORDING TO GONZALEZ) IS THE WORST THREAT TO SPANISH DEMOCRACY. ANOTHER DELICATE ISSUE IS REGIONALIZATION IN SPAIN;

F. THE PRESENCE OF U.S. MILITARY BASES IS A "BOTHER" SINCE THESE BASES WERE NEGOTIATED WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE SPANISH PEOPLE;

G. HE DEFENDED THE MONARCHY AND SAID THAT IT WAS A USEFUL MECHANISM THAT HAS ALLOWED FOR THE PEACEFUL TRANSITION FROM DICTATORSHIP TO DEMOCRACY.

H. APPROVAL OF THE NEW CONSTITUTION WILL GENERATE CRISIS WHICH IN TURN WILL OBLIGE THE GOS TO CALL GENERAL ELECTIONS WITHIN THE NEXT TWO YEARS.

3. COMMENT: THE TOP AD LEADERSHIP ROLLED OUT THE RED CARPET FOR GONZALEZ (AND ALSO FOR HAYA DE LA TORRE), WITH PEREZ CALLING THE PRESENCE OF THE TWO LEADERS "AN AUSPICIOUS" DEVELOPMENT FOR VENEZUELA. PEREZ WAS SOMEWHAT LESS EFFUSIVE ON HIS HOME TURF THAN HE HAD BEEN IN MADRID (76 MADRID 9073) ABOUT SIGNALING OUT THE PSOE AS A HARBINGER FOR THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF SPANISH DEMOCRACY. CLEARLY, THE VENEZUELAN LEADERSHIP FEELS AN IDEOLOGICAL TIE TO THE SPANISH SOCIALISTS (AND TO APRA FOR THAT MATTER), BUT PEREZ CERTAINLY WISHES TO KEEP HIS OPTIONS OPEN, PARTICULARLY SINCE KING JUAN CARLOS ARRIVES SEPT. 8.
FRECHETTE

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